

***Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 5315 "AN ACT CONCERNING THE PREVENTION OF THE HABITUATION OF POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS ANIMALS, THE POSTING OF INFORMATIONAL NOTICES CONCERNING ENCOUNTERS WITH WILDLIFE AND THE STATUS OF SNAPPING TURTLES UNDER STATE LAW"***

Submitted by Rosamund Downing

*\*DEEP Certified Wildlife Rehabilitator*

*\*District Leader (2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District, CT), Humane Society of the United States*

Dear Honorable Members of the Environment Committee:

As an outdoor enthusiast and a DEEP certified wildlife rehabilitator, I am pleased to see this common sense proposal. The posting of informational notices is a proactive step in preventing injury and saving lives (both human and wildlife).

CT residents enjoy communing with nature; unfortunately, many have a limited understanding of wildlife. As a wildlife rehabilitator, I often encounter well-meaning individuals doing the wrong thing. I have seen hikers attempt to pick up or pet baby animals. I have seen campers and hikers deliberately leave food for wildlife – or worse yet, try to handfeed the animals! People do not mean to cause harm or habituate wild animals, they are simply unaware of the consequences of their actions.

Before I became a rehabilitator, I would not have known what to do if confronted by a bear in the forest.

It is not a matter of having too many wild animals in CT, the problem is ignorance. In the interest of public safety, DEEP should post informational signs throughout the state to educate the public. It is an economic and efficient way to ensure public safety while protecting our treasured wildlife.

Please SUPPORT HB 5315.

Thank you.